



Section 3: Vision



In considering the future of Johnson Ferry Road, the Corridor has many unique opportunities and assets: well established neighborhoods, mix of retail and business activity, high quality health care provision, and access to the scenic Chattahoochee River. The Corridor serves as the eastern Cobb County's main north-south thoroughfare connecting south to Fulton County and is a small but growing neighborhood business center for the East Cobb area. Also, as the eastern gateway to Fulton County, the Johnson Ferry Road Corridor is vital to preserving and enhancing the community's positive image and quality of life.

A "vision", as used in a plan, means an image described in illustration and words about what an area will look like in the future. The vision must be grounded in the values of those who live, work and visit the area. Some aspects, given the constraints and realities will not change for that area no matter the planning efforts. Throughout the planning process, staff observed several reoccurring themes as articulated by the steering committee and the public. When combined, these themes are the catalyst for the recommendations and unified corridor design plan.

Community Vision on Issues

■ Aesthetics and Design

• Develop Corridor Identity

Any area that is as mature as the Johnson Ferry Road community will, over time, benefit from an identifiable and distinct entry to greet visitors entering the Corridor. Attractive streetscape improvements at favorable locations can help achieve this vision. Also, to foster community partnerships and remain financially conservative, this endeavor can be adopted by non-profit groups with landscaping expertise in conjunction with Cobb County.

• Beautify the Streetscape

In an effort to add more trees and green space to the environment, the northern commercial portion of Johnson Ferry Road, with its big box commercial buildings and large parking lots can be broken up by improving the streetscape with grass, trees, and shrubs. Large impervious spaces can also be broken up by incorporating small pocket parks. Small linear retail spaces are added along the street frontage to hide some of our surface parking from the views along the corridor.

• Create Community Gathering Spaces (activity nodes)

A sense of community is an important element making a place livable and sustainable. Different types of public gathering spaces are needed to meet the requirement of people from variety of age groups living in the surrounding neighborhood or working and shopping in the corridor. Currently there are few community gathering places.

Paved plaza with green space and large tree canopies in the center of shopping areas is ideally suited for older people and shoppers. Linear green spaces with small green pocket parks along the corridor are good places for people all ages, especially those walking or bicycling. Large green spaces or fields are needed to encourage young people to remain active with outdoor activities, and these spaces, in association with the linear green spaces will be able to accommodate events along the corridor, such as “The EAST COBBER” Parade and Festival (See photo 12).



Photo 12

Community Vision on Issues (Continued)

■ Complete Transportation System

- Emphasize Multi-modal Safety

A variety of travel options was highlighted throughout the planning process as needed improvements. Walking, biking or riding a trolley in association with an improved vehicular travel environment will become a necessity to shop, commute and recreate. Such improvements will address the needs of pedestrians, bicyclist, motorist and businesses. New sidewalks, crosswalks and pedestrian connections between businesses and neighborhoods, and transit improvements will allow convenient access to businesses. A well designed and operated trolley system can boost the functionality of the overall corridor plan and provide transit accessibility in a more context sensitive manner.

- Enhance Connectivity

In order to improve vehicular circulation, a more complete street network in the context of the existing street layout is needed. New street connections and internal access opportunities will provide the needed relief for individual businesses and customers based on their use of the corridor. As redevelopment and reinvestment occurs, good circulation through properties (internal links) and along/around connecting streets (concentric) to Johnson Ferry road will contribute to the vitality and success of the area.

- Improve Access Management

As the Corridor evolved and became more urban in nature, over the past 40 years, the users and the mode of operation have changed. Development patterns have improved from individual access points to shared access points. The Corridor will benefit tremendously by collaborating on an access management solution to the many curb cuts that not only limit the businesses but deter customers. It was noted at a public meeting that such inter-parcel access changes in the northern portion of the Corridor has been a positive experience for the residents and businesses alike.

- Improve Connection to the River

The Chattahoochee River is one of the prides of the Atlanta region as a whole. The proximity of this Corridor to the river has been an especially attractive element and a mainstay of the community. Enhancing connectivity to the river, by way of sidewalks and bicycle lanes will complete the sum of what makes Johnson Ferry Road Corridor unique.

Community Vision on Issues (Continued)

■ Land Uses and Business Activity

• Envision Business Diversity

The Corridor boasts a mix of business and sectors and will provide a broad, flexible mix of uses to accommodate the needs of the Corridor users, neighborhoods and community. The commercial sector should retain the mix of uses while supporting new uses to strengthen the Johnson Ferry Road market. Businesses should be encouraged and incentivized to reinvest in their land with higher quality buildings when aging properties deteriorate. The existing prominence of the area will continue to attract a variety of businesses to help its growth into a healthy business district with a neighborhood feel with multi-functional retail and service activity. The overall goal is to achieve a mix of land uses, including recreational amenities, open space and new residential type growth in the corridor. Also, space is needed to create a flex-business space that can be accessed and used by those that work from home, professionals that are becoming an increasingly large and important segment of society.

• Enhance Recreation Opportunities

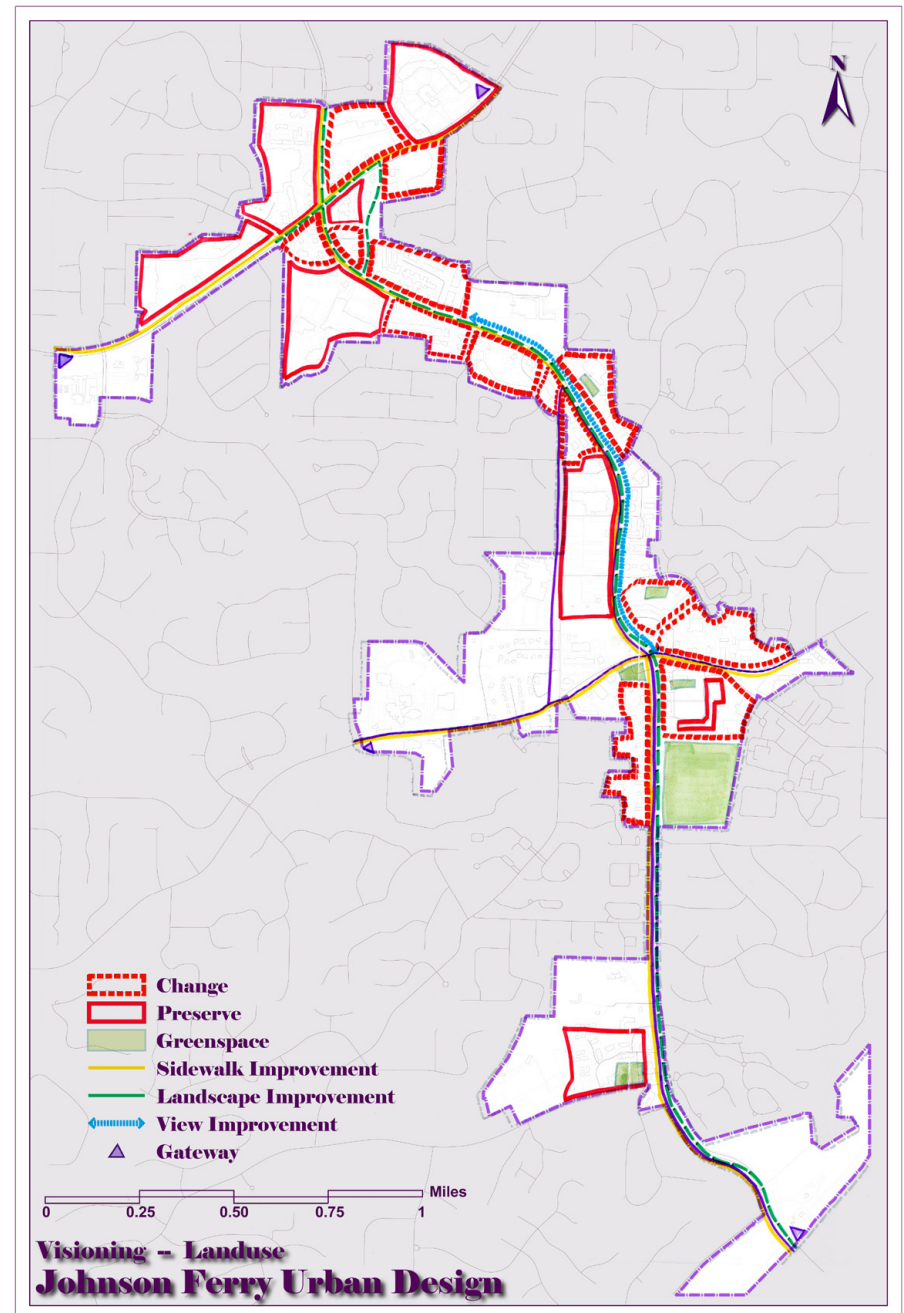
Recreational uses are a vital component in developing and increasing an area's quality-of-life. Therefore, it is important to integrate into the community as part of the Urban Design Plan. The corridor has two important anchors in its green infrastructure, the Chattahoochee National Recreation Area and the Chattahoochee River, both at the south end of the corridor. As a means to enhance these resources, it is important to connect them to the wider community. This is done by incorporating green infrastructure into the transportation environment with better bicycle and pedestrian access, additional trees to provide shade, and enhanced landscape buffers to increase safety. Finally, the community identified two important properties as potential park and recreational opportunities: the Perkins property on the east side of Johnson Ferry Road and the Felton Property, which the county is legally obligated to care for, per the term of the deed, as trustee.

Community Vision on Maps

During the first two public meetings, the community participated in a strategic planning exercise and a design workshop, which were integral elements in defining the vision for this area of East Cobb. The two illustrations below provide the Land Use and Connectivity visions that are results of these public processes.

■ Land Use Vision (See Map 25):

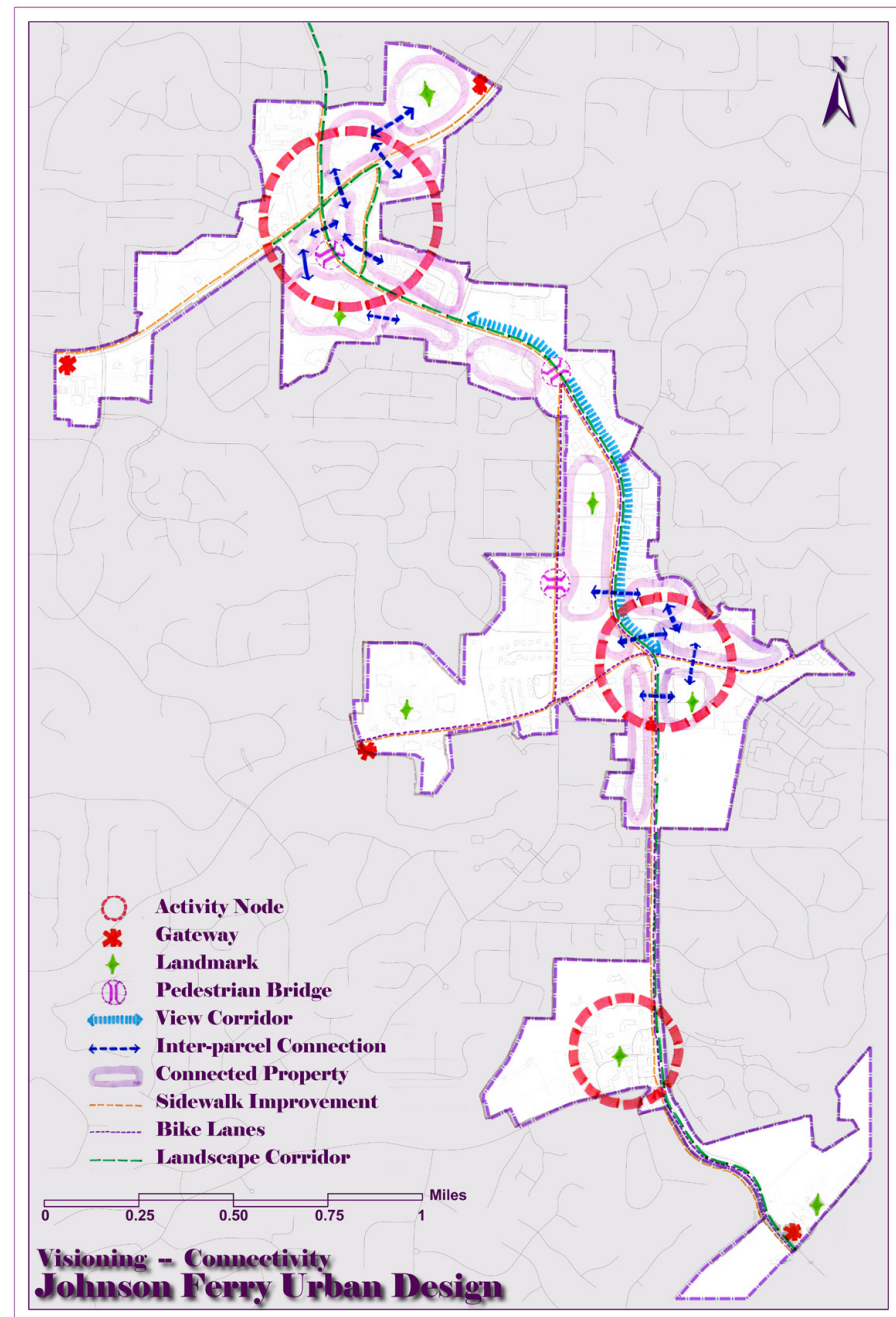
- Areas to protect, those identified as community assets
- Areas for change, those that are potential opportunities for new or altered land uses and business revitalization
- Public parks and gathering spaces integrated into the overall built environment



Map 25

Community Vision on Maps (Continued)

- Connectivity Vision (See Map 26):
 - Identification of the three main activity nodes
 - Gateway locations for entrance into the corridor
 - Landmarks, unique or important buildings that create sense-of-place
 - Areas for improved inter-parcel connections
 - Identification of the view corridor
 - Locations requiring bicycle and pedestrian improvement



Map 26